



Media information

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Oil and lubricants sector gearing up for electrification

Recent vehicle sales data shows that there is gradual change taking place in the motor industry. The car-buying public is slowly accepting that alternatively fuelled and electric vehicles should be an important constituent of the UK's car parc. A mix of powertrains to suit the varying needs of drivers while balancing environmental responsibilities will be critical for many years to come, bringing new opportunities for workshops and distributors to offer the next generation of lubrication whilst continuing to provide highly efficient oils for the latest petrol and diesel models. Does a more diverse market pose a threat to the lubricants industry?

There is no doubt that the industry will continue to evolve but the need for effective engine oils and lubricants – which minimise friction and aid cooling while sealing, cleaning and protecting moving parts – will very much remain intact, albeit in an evolved state. Beyond the traditional internal combustion engine, top quality engine oils will be paramount for achieving the performance needed in hybrid vehicles while other fluids will provide vital lubrication for purely electric vehicles.

To date, the impact of electrification on oil and lube manufacturers has been minimal; according to the SMMT, the market share of electric vehicles stands at just over 1%. The trend, however, is upwards, as demonstrated by Volvo which has pledged that all new models will be offered with an electric or hybrid option by 2019 - but that doesn't mean it won't produce pure petrol or diesel models as well.

Looking specifically at the rising popularity of hybrid powertrains, unsupported claims about the compatibility of existing lubricants have arisen. In reality, hybrid engines tend to utilise lower viscosity synthetic products to maximise fuel efficiency, meaning that in most instances oils using older technologies are not compatible. However, the Comma range already covers most of the hybrid powertrains, enabling the diesel and petrol engines to thrive in their altered roles within hybrid ecosystems.

Despite the growing buffet of options open to drivers, all vehicles require lubrication and numerous other fluids, whether it be engine oil, gear oil, clutch oil, hydraulic fluids (including for braking systems), coolants and more. The lubricants sector, along with workshop partners, will increasingly need to focus on efficiency and quality to deliver optimal fluids. Gear oil in particular is undergoing considerable changes due to the new demands on its function within electric and hybrid vehicle powertrains.

Before a sizeable proportion of vehicles become plugged in rather than refilled, however, there must first be enormous investment in infrastructure. Once this starts to take place in a much more concerted way, the market for existing oils may start to shift more tangibly. The commercial vehicle sector will be even slower to adapt, as will the way the industry evolves outside of the UK in Europe

About Comma

Comma Oil & Chemicals Limited was founded in 1965. As a world class manufacturer and supplier of automotive lubricants, chemicals and car care products, the Comma brand range of products for passenger, light commercial and heavy goods vehicles is distributed in more than 40 global markets to both professional mechanics and motorists.

Comma became a wholly-owned operating division of Cosan S.A. of São Paulo, Brazil, in 2012. For more information, visit: www.CommaOil.com

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Feature Material

where legislation, economic conditions and demand is even harder to predict. As the developing world grows, the rate of adoption of electric powertrains will differ to that of the West.

For the end-user, greater choice will bring advantages in the shape of lowered running and maintenance costs by purchasing a vehicle most suited to their needs. For the foreseeable future, the menu of vehicles offered to the public will remain diverse. For workshops and distributors, it means a switch to new oil products and choosing the best suppliers, and with it new business opportunities.

For further information, contact your local area sales manager, or call Comma Customer Services on 01474 564 311.

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